1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34

888 proper care. But helpless old people are few in Cherán. Most old people, even though they may not perform an equal share of the labor, keep fairly active and useful.

SICKNESS AND ITS CURE

75 Ideas about sickness and its cure are in a state of transition in Cherán. The list of [178] diseases is a combination of standard medical terms, sometimes misapplied, and names from traditional sources. Treatment of disease is likewise changing rapidly. Some people in town will go to a clinic in Parácho and in serious cases will send for the doctor there. For part of the time of the study a *practicante* in medicine was resident in the town (a ● [759] *practicante* is a medical student who has completed all his work but has to spend 8 months in a town without a doctor and write a report on medical and health conditions before receiving his final credentials). Very few people evince any dislike for doctors; if they shun doctors it is because of the expense involved. On the other hand, most of the local curers are reticent and uncommunicative, although many of them make use of remedies purchased in the [366] drug stores of nearby towns (Cherán has no drug store).

759 All the curers (*curanderas*—šuríjki; in other towns ¢inájpiri) located in the town were women. Usually they are middle-aged or old. In those cases where biographical data could be secured, the majority were daughters or granddaughters of curers. In some cases they had been taught, but apparently few of them used their knowledge until they became of mature years. Very few curers profess to cure all illnesses; usually they claim to cure two or three and in some cases only one. Twenty-five centavos is the usual charge for curing, whether the patient comes to the curer's house or the curer visits the patient. One curer visited had the reputation of being a "bad" witch, another a "good" witch, but generally the curers are not witches. Some rejected indignantly the idea of having anything to do with witchcraft, denying even ability to cure witchcraft. Anything to do with witchcraft is a *maloficio* and not to be touched by ordinary persons.

753 Ideas of sickness are varied. Injuries, such as broken bones, dislocated joints, and wounds,

753 are recognized as of mechanical origin. Some diseases are vaguely regarded as of natural causation and as possibly contagious; others are clearly of supernatural character even though curable by natural means, although the line between the two is not sharp. In either case, herbs, unguents, and drugs are believed capable of helping the sickness. To utilize these methods of curing requires no special ability but merely knowledge. Many minor ailments
759 are treated at home; the curer is merely a person of greater knowledge who is called in when home remedies fail or the case is obviously beyond the knowledge of the household. Similarly, the doctor at Parácho is called only when the curer fails or the case is believed beyond the curer's powers. Obviously, this situation has not greatly enhanced the reputation of the doctor, for most of his patients are nearly moribund some hours before he can reach them.

757 Curers usually make a diagnosis first. No information on methods could be secured. It appears that a visual inspection and questioning of the patients are parts of the diagnosis, and possibly the only diagnosis. Once the diagnosis is made, the curer decides what steps to take to cure the patient. Often herbs kept on hand can be used; others, however, must be specially sought because they must be collected either fresh or at certain hours of the day.

753 In general, sickness by some is related to the strength of the blood which resides below the
[826] nape of the neck. This is also the location of the individual's life. Persons with much blood are healthy. When persons are seriously ill, it is because their blood is scanty; when there is insufficient to nourish the "seat of life," the person dies. There are also vague concepts of sickness being caused by "heat" or "cold," (sophisticated Agustín attributed a cold to drinking water while sweating) "airs" (which may also be either hot or cold), fright (*espanto*), and, much more specific, evil eye.

752 Broken bones are treated by specialists, who
[759] may also be curers of diseases or, in one case at least, midwives. The bones are manipulated into place and bound to splints without other treatment.

Dislocations are massaged repeatedly with olive oil until the bones are back in place. They